

## **REMARKS**

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding Final Office Action mailed July 27, 2004. Claims 1, 3, 5, 9, and 16 - 20 have been cancelled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer.

Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 2, 4, 6 – 8, 10 – 15, and 21 remain pending. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

### **I. Allowable Subject Matter**

The Office Action indicates that claims 2, 4, 6 – 8, 10 – 15, and 21 are allowed. Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging the allowed subject matter.

### **II. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 102**

#### **A. Statement of the Rejection**

The Office Action indicates that claims 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by *Thomas* (U.S. Patent No. 3,612,744).

#### **B. Discussion of the Rejection**

Applicants have canceled claim 18 without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer to expedite allowance of the present application by removing all outstanding issues. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 18 has been rendered moot.

**CONCLUSION**

In light of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that all rejections have been rendered moot and that pending claims 2, 4, 6 – 8, 10 – 15, and 21 are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby requested. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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